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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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REPORT NO. [REDACTED]

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COUNTRY USSR

DATE DISTR. 25 Feb. 1955

SUBJECT Testing of a New Four-Engine Jet Bomber  
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In early December 1954, the Soviet Air Force unit stationed in Bad Voeslau (N 47-58, E 16-13), Austria, was assembled into formation and a general order, published by the Soviet Ministry of Defense, was read to the unit.<sup>1</sup> This order stated that a Soviet Air Force officer, name and rank unknown, had been given the title of "Hero of the Soviet Union" for certain exploits. The order was signed by Soviet Minister of Defense, Bulganin. According to the general order, a four-engine jet bomber had been tested in the Moscow area sometime in 1954. A mistake had been made by the aircraft commander who had put the aircraft into an almost vertical climb. At an altitude of 8,000 m, the aircraft stalled and went out of control; the aircraft commander was the first to bail out and he was later found on the ground decapitated. Source was not told the method used by the aircraft commander to bail out or whether an open or unopened parachute was found with his body. The second person to bail out was the radioman (radist) who abandoned the aircraft by pressing a button and was immediately ejected from the aircraft downward, together with his seat, and landed safely; the copilot and the flight engineer (bortmekhanik) stayed with the plane. At an altitude of 1,000 m, the copilot was able to regain control of the aircraft and brought it in for a safe landing. For this, the copilot was awarded the title "Hero of the Soviet Union".

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1. [REDACTED] Comment: Source believed that this general order was read only to Soviet Air Force units [REDACTED]

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